11-13-1972

Forestry instructor presents paper on Anaconda soil rehabilitation

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FORESTRY INSTRUCTOR PRESENTS
PAPER ON ANACONDA SOIL REHABILITATION

MISSOULA--

Ronald Taskey, instructor in the University of Montana School of Forestry, presented a paper dealing with lands damaged by smelter pollution in the Anaconda area at the annual meeting of the Soil Science Society of America in Miami Beach, Fla.

The Florida meeting was part of the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy Oct. 30-Nov.3.

The paper presented by Taskey is entitled: "Soil Contamination by Heavy Metals Inhibits Rehabilitation of Land Damaged by Smelter Wastes." It was coauthored by Dr. Thomas Nimlos, a UM forestry professor who is on leave for two years to serve with the Peace Corps in Chile.

The paper is the result of two years of study by Tackey and Nimlos on lands damaged by wastes from the copper smelter at Anaconda. They studied the growth of lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir seedlings in soil samples brought back from the Anaconda area. Their efforts were to help develop guidelines for revegetating the mountains around Anaconda.

From these studies Taskey concludes, "Much of the vegetation has been destroyed by pollutants from the smelter, but reforestation by simply planting trees alone will not work. They are wasting their time just planting lodgepole pine.

"The soil has to be ameliorated in order to get good rehabilitation; it's more than a matter of shutting off the contaminates from the stack," concluded Taskey

The study also showed that the soil contaminates such as arsenic, copper, lead and zinc, are concentrated near the surface of the soil and this must be kept in mind when methods for soil improvement are attempted.